'Networked Coalitions' as Metropolitan Governance: Lessons from the Emergence of Australia's 'Committees for Cities and Regions'

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Abstract

The continuous rescaling of metropolitan governance has been a prominent feature of the neoliberal state. Metropolitan coalitions are one variant of governance in which disparate actors are brought together around a common agenda or platform. Drawing upon the example of Australia's 'Committees for Cities and Regions' (CCR), this paper applies urban governance theory to better understand the effectiveness of networked metropolitan governance coalitions. We find that such coalitions derive political legitimacy from the externalities produced by their network relations, which we theorize as a three-dimensional nexus of vertical (between levels of government), horizontal (between local actors), and 'diagonal' (with CCR counterparts) components. Although the CCR model is somewhat unique to Australia and New Zealand, it reflects similar networked and multi-scalar processes at work elsewhere, serving as a template for political landscapes in which in-built legacy political arrangements largely preclude metropolitan-scale issues from being addressed.

Introduction

The rescaling of metropolitan governance is a prominent feature of the territorial state in the neoliberal era of globalization (Brenner, 1999, McGuirk, 2005). This has been simultaneously driven by roll-back neoliberalism – in which the state cedes power to the market logics of privatization – and roll-out neoliberalism, which reconfigures state spaces and territorial structures (McGuirk, 2005; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Most nation-states have reoriented, and in many cases reconfigured, metropolitan governance around global agendas championing the 'city' scale over the 'nation', particularly in the realm of economic competitiveness. However, rescaling requires not only balancing local concerns against various pressures associated with globalization (alternatively presented as 'opportunities', 'threats', and/or 'disruptors' to existing metropolitan prosperity), but innovating upon governance in ways that recalibrate stakeholder dynamics and leverage political spaces for new actors and agendas to emerge.

Metropolitan rescaling associated with global change inherently results in tension between multiple levels of government (Clarke, 2017; McGuirk, 2003), with metropolitan-scale actors placed in a delicate position between local cities and councils on one hand, and the territorial nation-state on the other. Further complicating this is that metropolitan governance actors often struggle to bring together disparate groups that include both local and state-level political actors alongside the interests of civil society, business leaders, labour unions, major institutions (e.g. universities, port authorities) and other regional stakeholders (Addie, 2013; Orfield, 2011). While metropolitan governance is regarded as critical to achieving a more harmonized regional agenda, observing the often ephemeral configurations of networked

governance including both formal political actors and others (Benz and Papadopoulos, 2006; Emerson et al., 2012; Heinelt and Kübler, 2004) reveals the difficulty of setting a metropolitan agenda.

This paper analyses the networked governance of Australia's 'Committees for Cities and Regions' (CCR). Scrutinising three distinct metropolitan governance configurations reveals how 'globalized' economic development objectives deployed alongside localized agendas (including social development, liveability, and infrastructure improvement) are shaping city-regions with state-like agendas. The paper delves into the specific cases of CCR in Perth and Sydney, paralleled by the example of Brisbane, which until 2018 did not have a 'Committee For'. Incorporating diverse local and global actors through networked governance, CCR vary widely but commonly rely on 'horizontal' collaboration with stakeholders and 'vertical' cooperation with multiple layers of government. Importantly, however, CCRs' distinctive local governance capacity is extended beyond their city or region of origin, underwritten by what we term 'diagonal' cooperation with cognate institutions through a 'network of networks'. Each local committee is set within a common framework and structure that ensures CCR have a global orientation that is somewhat consistent from one context to another. How this phenomenon negotiates contemporary urban affairs beyond the local, and unsettles dominant stakeholder relationships towards a rescaled political landscape, is explored in this paper.

Methodological and Theoretical Approach

Despite the rich intellectual history of studies on collaborative metropolitan governance (cf. Clarke, 2017), few studies link globalization to parallel cases that

bridge both intra- and inter-metropolitan politics through urban governance theory. Furthermore, though research on 'networked governance' is rather well-developed (Malecki, 2002; Nelles et al., 2018), it often relates to individual issues such as transportation planning (Addie, 2013), climate change (Howes et al., 2015), regional equity (Klein & Tremblay, 2010), or innovation and economic development (Bradford & Bramwell, 2014) in specific regions.

Our method and analysis draw on understandings from MacLeod (2011), who contends that a richness emerges from a forensic analysis of aspirational discourses of "novel governances" and "altered geographies" (p. 2631). Information on each metropolitan context was sourced from archives, media and public documents, as well as 13 semi-structured key informant interviews across the three cities of Sydney, Perth, and Brisbane in 2016. Informants were selected from CCR leaders, partners, and affiliate groups as those best positioned to inform the study, having expert knowledge on CCR functionality and dynamics. After receiving ethical clearance from respective universities, potential participants were contacted via email with an invitation to participate in a face-to-face interview. Initial questions were semi-structured, with open-ended questions allowing for detailed commentary. As many, if not all, key informants were considered to be urban 'élites', participants were offered a range of options in terms of how their name and title would be either presented or withheld, following Lancaster (2017).

Metropolitan Governance in Context

Internationally, the rationale underpinning metropolitan governance has changed radically over time. The reform-minded local government amalgamation movement of

the late 19th century continued into the early 20th century. Reforms in Australia and elsewhere promoted metropolitan-scale ideals underpinned by the logics of efficiency, and are sometimes referred to as 'old' regionalism (Savitch & Vogel 2009; Tomàs, 2011).

As post-war suburbanization expanded the geographical scale of cities, metropolitan governance and planning arose to mitigate the resultant cross-boundary issues. The Public Choice School dominated the 1950s and 1960s (cf. Tiebout, 1956) based on a utilitarian argument superseding equity, and stressing that metropolitan residents 'vote with their feet' when selecting a residential suburb that fit their purposes. This was particularly relevant in the United States where large disparities began to appear between deindustrialising inner cities and independently incorporated suburbs with vastly different socio-economic profiles.

Across the latter half of the 20th century, 'soft' governance and cooperation were prioritized instead. The main drivers of metropolitan-scale cooperation were structural change tied to deindustrialization, political fragmentation, and socio-economic polarization associated with the collapse of the Keynesian welfare state, as both North Atlantic Fordism and state-centric *dirigisme* buckled in favour of a much more complex – and devolved – urban political landscape (Brenner, 2004; Ward & Jonas, 2004). Consequently, in contrast to 'old' regionalism, the 'new' regionalism movement of the 1980s and 1990s recognized that a fixation on territorial structures alone could not accommodate the necessary governance vehicles to ensure metropolitan prosperity (Swanstrom, 1996; Wheeler, 2002), particularly in the face of globally scaled competitive pressures.

Since the 1980s, reterritorialization informed by increasingly global imperatives has redirected metropolitan and regional governance (Brenner, 1999; Olesen, 2012; Mouat & Dodson, 2013; 2014). With a focus on economic growth in a global context, new territorial configurations such as global city-regions have responded to uneven development that hollowed out many state institutions, requiring new and more nuanced political configurations with greater stakeholder involvement (Allmendinger et al., 2015). This extended beyond the formal political apparatus, raising significant implications for democratic urbanism, which relies on plural networks negotiating within a fast-paced re(b)ordering of the state and the city-region (Mouat & Dodson, 2013; 2014). As Brenner (2004) contends, such 'new state spaces' are defined by strategic institutional arenas at the sub-national levels in response to fundamental crisis with the Keynesian welfare state.

Understanding Networked Metropolitan Governance

Post-industrial capitalism has imposed new constraints on cities and regions, placing inherited systems and discourses against modern challenges (Gleeson et al., 2004). The rapid rise of (aspiring) global city-regions (Baker & Ruming, 2015) was pushed by evolving policy mobilities and sensibilities (Clarke, 2012; Temenos & McCann, 2012), raising questions regarding the most appropriate political configurations, and theories or models, to support metropolitan governance resilience and responsiveness in a post-Keynesian world order (cf. Harrison & Hoyler, 2014).

Contemporary theories on metropolitan governance focus on the shift from managerialism toward entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989) and, more recently, the plurality of influential actors and perspectives. As McCann (2016) demonstrates, much of the metropolitan governance theory of the 1990s was grounded in structuralist

political economy (see Brenner, 1999). Logan and Molotch's (1987) work reflects this tradition, asserting that the urban 'agenda' is fundamentally business élite-driven, and prioritizes profit-oriented motives. This seminal interpretation of metropolitan politics relies on Marxian notions of class, with 'growth machine' politics driven by the co-option of formal state governance mechanisms by those with property interests.

Furthermore, regime theory (RT) served as a 'leitmotif' for self-reliance and local mobilization (Pierre, 2014), and was particularly influential in and beyond the United States in the 1990s and early 2000s. Regimes are "most basically a political coalition" (Dowding, 2001: 15) of public-private sector relationships (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001) formed across distinct junctures, changing to promote political order (Stone, 1989, 1993). From this era, we recognise what might be described as precursors to CCR through the "the formation of coalition politics" comprised of "local financiers, industrialists and merchants, or some 'roundtable' of business leaders and real estate and property developers" (Harvey, 1989, p. 6). One of the main critiques of these classic works is that such perspectives largely failed to account for post-industrial shifts and 'globalizing' urban theory—precisely two of the symptoms around which CCR emerged. Nonetheless, valuable lessons can be drawn which are remarkably applicable decades later as a basis for addressing democratic and civic blindspots to which CCR respond.

More recent literature on state rescaling has taken into account a broader diversity of actors and relationships (Feiock, 2009; Nyseth, 2008; Provan & Kenis, 2008) in metropolitan affairs. Post-structuralist critiques have highlighted the role of non-hegemonic actors in governance, questioning who controls the resources necessary to sustain collective action (Pierre, 2014). This suggests a clear gap in

current discourses, which do not "explain observed variations in the strength and capacity of city-regional partnerships" (Nelles et al., 2018: 1349). It might be argued that developments in governance thinking remain weak in this regard by tending to dogmatic interpretations of theory(-building), avoiding theorising at all, or focusing on grassroots governance innovations and activism.

The emergence of CCR further add to the theoretical challenge, in that many of these novel configurations can be conceived as non-traditional and fuzzy, and the wider network embodies a "relational perspective on space which sees urban areas as consisting of a complex set of overlapping networks" (Buser 2012: 282). The emergence of CCR as metropolitan coalitions of diverse stakeholders thus parallels a broader contemporary movement toward networked governance across multiple contexts (LeRoux & Carr, 2010; Porio, 2012). Networked governance serves to break down hierarchical notions of state-led government in favor of more practical and/or urgent objectives (Feiock, 2007). This resonates with scholarly observation that human society is more networked (Castells, 1996), and that political-economic processes connect cities through 'world city networks' (Taylor et al., 2014) and 'global production networks' (Coe et al., 2008). However, as CCR are soft network coalitions, we adopt a fluid (as opposed to formally structured) definition of networks following Simmel's concept of overlapping social circles (Simmel, 1955; Neal & Neal, 2013).

Emergence of Australia's Committees for Cities and Regions

Metropolitan governance has been extensively studied in Australia, ranging from professional and academic accounts of Sydney – and to a lesser degree Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane – as Australia's emerging 'global cities' (Baker & Ruming, 2015;

Searle, 1996; Sigler, 2012), to a more balanced and critical perspective as the outcome of variegated neoliberalisms (McGuirk, 2005). Part of the metropolitan rescaling process has been reterritorialization as a relational planning strategy, which Rogers (2014) and Ong (2006) refer to as the introduction of "zoning technologies". Sydney's so-called 'Global Arc' is case-in-point, referring to a discursive planning meta-geography outlining the city's affluent and economically robust eastern suburbs. Development corporations have heavily influenced recent globalization-induced urbanization, linking public agencies to private sector interests (Bunker et al, 2012).

The underlying focus on economic development in Australia's CCR was borne of a large-scale transformation of the national economy as the Hawke-Keating (1983-1996) and later Howard (1996-2007) administrations ushered in a more extroverted national outlook. The first CCR in Australia dates back to 1985, when the Committee for Melbourne (CfM) initially brought together business, academic, and non-profit communities to advocate for change in a city that was rapidly metamorphosing (Committees for Cities and Regions (CCR), 2016; Teller & Goddard, 2006). Intensifying globalization caused widespread economic change as a threefold "crisis of metropolis" (Mitchell-Weaver et al., 2000, p. 851) – socio-economic disparities, sharper global competition, and urban sprawl. Simultaneously, rapid suburbanization and population change (e.g., ageing, out-migration, and inner-city decline), and a national recession in the early 1980s threatened Melbourne's continuing prosperity. At the time, prevailing perceptions across the Melbourne policy realm were that the city was losing its competitive advantage relative to Sydney (Taylor & Thrift, 1980), and that deindustrialization would have far-reaching implications in a city that was at the centre of the domestic manufacturing economy. Consequently, a profound governance

response was warranted to achieve transformative action and an emerging fierce commitment to globally competitive strategies. Yet within the Australian political system, "intergovernmental incongruence" (Bolleyer and Bytzek, 2009) and the "underlying realities of Australian federalism" (Phillimore and Fenna, 2017, p. 597) compounded deficits in urban local government capacities (Tomlinson, 2018) to act accordingly. Thus the CfM established a new template that rippled across, and ultimately reshaped, the trajectory of Australasian metropolitan governance.

Over the course of three decades, the momentum of CfM evolved into more than a dozen CCR across Australia and New Zealand. As agenda-setting coalitions, CCR are somewhat unique, and distinct from analogous organizations in a number of ways that draws upon their broad remit and networked structure. Firstly, their political identity is chartered as networked *stewardship* in terms of establishing legitimacy and distinguishing themselves from chambers of commerce, tourism councils, and peak bodies[1]. Though corporate support is ultimately what sustains them financially, their cross-sectoral interests are aligned as place-based syndicates (Wetzstein, 2013) establishing taskforces around strategic priorities for local development and global recognition.

Secondly, their actions are undertaken as independent *advocacy* via strategic membership and representation. Advocacy is essential to exercising their stewardship as *raison d'être* across a shared coalition platform despite considerable differences in their structure, influence, and remit. It is also critical within their respective political shells, as mounting a case for sea port, heavy rail, airport upgrades, or even extended retail hours (as in Perth) involves multiple State- and Federal-level authorities.

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[1] A peak body is an Australian term for industry advocacy groups and associations, such as Chambers of Commerce, that are conventionally associated with governance or social actors and stakeholders.

Thirdly, the geographical *diffusion* of CCR provided a platform for their long-term development, demonstrating network capacities and diverse forms within both (global) cities and (rural) regions. After the significant lag between the formation of CfM and the Committee for Sydney, there was a cascade of CCR establishment across other cities and regions across Australia and New Zealand, particularly from 2011 in regional and rural areas. Hobart is the only Australian state capital without a CCR, with smaller areas forming regional alliances (e.g., *BroomeFuture*) or transitioning to committee status (e.g., Committees for Canterbury (New Zealand) and Tropical North Queensland (*Advance Cairns*)) between 2013 and 2015. This diffusion has created a group-like mentality through the organizational network. As one of the more newly-established CCR proclaims, "Committee for Portland is one of the newer and smaller Committees fors, but that's never worried us and we will continue to punch above our weight, thanks to the power of the Committee for brand" (CCR, 2016). This "brand" refers to the network externalities derived from what we term the 'diagonal' network dimension, linking CCR to one another through common structures, dialogues, and approaches to metropolitan and regional governance.

Fertile Ground: Pursuing 'Metropolitan' Governance in Australian Cities

CCR sit within a context in which State governments (within a federal system) hold constitutional authority over nearly all urban planning and development (Searle & Bunker, 2010). This constitutionally based role is nevertheless weakened by vertical fiscal imbalance in which the federal government has the main revenue-raising powers (Mangioni, 2018; Tomlinson, 2017), meaning that the states look to significant federal revenue assistance to carry out their constitutional responsibilities for city

development and functioning. Complicating the issue further is the fact that multiple state-level departments are dedicated to metropolitan affairs such as regional planning, major transport infrastructure, water and sewerage, police, fire services, mass transit, and education.

The current system of state-level metropolitan planning and economic development has meant that despite their nominally urban remit, dominant rural/regional considerations have largely precluded a true metropolitan authority from manifesting. However, as cities become of rising importance to national economic competitiveness, the Federal government has increasingly driven urban initiatives (Ruming et al., 2014). Metropolitan plans are drafted by all state and territory governments in Australia, yet they are only statutory in the cases of Sydney and Southeast Queensland (Brisbane). Fragmented local governments lack constitutional recognition and hold weak revenue-raising capacity, and State governments have been steadfastly unwilling to devolve power and resources to unitary metropolitan governments. As Alex Blauensteiner, the Head of Business Innovation, Skills, and Trade Development for Brisbane Marketing, pointed out,

> *[Tension between levels of government] seems to be the way Australia works from my view. The Lord Mayor's going to negotiate with the State, and the State is going to negotiate with the Feds; it's probably a bit of a challenge that we have the State wanting to do one thing and the city wanting to do another.*

Federal policy champions metropolitan issues through a variety of relatively uncoordinated agencies (including a Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, and the Prime Minister's Department) and by co-funding state-based initiatives.

Early attempts at metropolitanization were most salient under the auspices of infrastructure development boards, notably around water provision. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was established in 1891 to ensure orderly water and sewerage development, and later became the main metropolitan planning authority. It was abolished in the early 1990s, with many of its planning functions absorbed into the Victoria state government. In Sydney, a State government metropolitan water and sewerage authority was also formed in the late 19th century. In the post-war period, a planning council comprised of local municipal members was established by the government to make a statutory metropolitan plan. But the council was subsequently replaced by a State planning authority. A State government board had been established in the 19th century to operate metropolitan tramway services, and continues today as a state-run public bus authority.

In Brisbane, the City Council was established in 1925 under the state *City of Brisbane Act*. This gave the new City Council the power to make land use zones and to provide regional-level infrastructure for the Brisbane urban area, including water, sewerage, and public transport (tramways) services. Some regional infrastructure responsibilities were later transferred to the State government, although bus services most highways/motorways remain a shared City Council responsibility. In Perth, a state-level Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority had existed since the 1960s, but its remit was primarily around land use planning, leaving many other elements of the metropolitan agenda to parallel government agencies.

A Comparative Network Analysis of CCR across Australia

The primary argument of this paper is that the effectiveness of CCR in Australia is critically reliant on a three-dimensional nexus connecting disparate stakeholders. This nexus is assembled through three sets of relationships: 1) governmental relations as the vertical dimension; 2) federated relationships with other CCR as the diagonal relationships; and, 3) overlap of metropolitan stakeholder agendas as the horizontal relationships. It follows that the power of CCR is therefore derived from the network externalities produced by such relationships. In other words, CCR establish trust and credibility through their networks, which in turn enable them to champion policy across various domains. While links to government (vertical) and to local stakeholders (horizontal) are well-established as pillars of networked metropolitan governance, the evolving peer-alliance 'network-of-networks' renders them somewhat unique in their coordination. Figure 1 schematizes these networked relationships.

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Diagonal relationships that link CCR provide a mechanism for information exchange and mutual learning, as well as a template for new CCR to emerge within a common institutional framework. These relationships have been formalized over time by an umbrella organization called the 'Committees for Cities and Regional Network' (CCRN)[2], self-described as a "network of like-minded organizations enhancing their social, economic and environmental sustainability to improve liveability, growth and sustainability" (CCRN, 2016, p. 3). It was formalized in 2011 along with the establishment of a CCRN secretariat (originally held by the Committee for Perth (CfP) and more recently the Committee for Melbourne), which acts as a *de facto* voice for the group. CCRN institutionalizes a soft network of "constructive corporate

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[2]Also referred to as the 'Committees for Cities and Regions'

participation" based on "trust, leadership, and common space [that incubates and] intertwines social and economic development for the city" around core strategic issues (Teller & Goddard, 2006, p. 108) that "not only facilitates collaboration and sharing of information but also collectively articulates the value of cities and regions on a broader scale" (CCRN, 2016, p. 7).

CCRN is currently comprised of 15 CCR franchised across New Zealand (Auckland and Canterbury) and Australia, largely Victoria (e.g., Melbourne, Ballarat, Gippsland, Geelong) and Western Australia (e.g., Perth, Broome). As Marion Fulker, the Chief Executive of the Committee for Perth and former network leader, recalled:

In 2009 ...there was a formal MOU agreement between all of the 'Committees for' founded on a shared set of guiding principles about being apolitical, collaborative. There are about 5 or 6 core guiding principles. ...We share [information] ... [the] funding model, governance structure, constitutions, all those sorts of things.

The timeline of CCR development across different regions in Australasia provides richer detail on CCR individually and as an emerging phenomenon. Table 1 demonstrates the wide-ranging diversity of organizational aims, membership bases, scales of governance, and driving goals.

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The diffusion of CCR from one context to another is also apparent in Table 1. As Fulker made clear:

Melbourne always saw itself as the Mothership. It tended to be the vortex for Committees For if they were thinking of establishing would go to Melbourne first

to find out 'How do we do it?'. And then reach in to the broader informal network

to find out 'Well how did they do it?

Through its evolution, the CfM developed an eponymous "Melbourne Model methodology[3] to tackle economic, social and cultural impacts of urbanization by combining and coordinating resources, ideas, experience and knowledge inherent in the corporate sector, government and civil society" (Teller & Goddard, 2006, p. 107). As Michael Schoch, a corporate member of CfP, reflected, "when I look back, Melbourne had a crisis. So the case for the Committee [and] change was crystal clear. Everybody needed to pull together".

The sense of need driving CCR formation in Melbourne led to the emergence of others over time, but with different issues at hand. As Table 1 indicates, CCR set agendas around persistent urbanization issues such as population growth and globalization-induced economic change, as well as more nuanced issues such as East-West polarization (Sydney), tourism (Cairns), deindustrialization (Geelong), agribusiness (Gippsland, Shepparton), and liveability—a factor unifying all of the committees. As one interviewee noted, CCR have:

... always been about the liveability. I think you can see that thread through all

of the Committees For. Liveability is one of those words, like sustainability; it

means different things to different people. But if you actually read the manifesto

of every Committee For, they are really talking about quality of life.

Thus one major outcome of CCR evolution has been a distinctive transition from corporate business-minded philanthropy to cooperative networks with a public conscience focussing on issues like liveability. As individual coalitions, CCR are

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[3] See www.melbourne.org.au

funded by a base of members, offering full-fee memberships to corporations and other institutional stakeholders, and discounted and/or *pro bono* memberships for non-profit actors. In most cases, this funds an administration; in some, ancillary activities such as commissioned research and related publications are also funded. Perhaps most important are the regular meetings between a diverse set of stakeholders, as well as special events or fora around particular issues.

CCR carry democratic limitations as they are not required to be representative. Indeed, the variability in transparency and potential for using CCR as political platforms means there is a risk in promoting the interests of their private and fee-paying members. Furthermore, despite the common model, their range of issues is too great for there to be a unified voice across them, meaning that some have been more influential than others. As one CCR leader observed:

> *...the one thing we haven't been able to do as a collective is come out with a view on priorities or even a set of principles, because every region that we represent is driven by different economic factors. Some are in population increase, some in decline, some stagnant. Some have infrastructure deficit, if they are a large enough city some even have infrastructure over-supply. So we just can't find that common platform upon which to lobby from.*

Australia's Metropolitan Coalitions

Examining metropolitan governance in three cities reveals of how each has dealt with both commonalities and local idiosyncrasies. Two of the largest and most prominent members of the CCR network are the CfS (founded 1996, then with 3.9 million

population) and CfP (2006, then with 1.6 million population). These will be discussed in what follows alongside the longstanding absence of a Committee for Brisbane.

Shaping 'Australia's Global City' in Sydney

As Australia's most populous city and the well-known 'global city', Sydney's regional interests are driven by both local and global considerations. The founder and first Chairman of CfS was Rod McGeoch, who led Sydney's successful bid for the 2000 Olympic Games. CfS was intended to promote Sydney's development in the aftermath of the Games to forestall possible reduced levels of economic activity. Until 2011, when CEO Tim Williams was appointed, the CfS operated with voluntary staff. It significantly increased its activities under Williams with a small coterie of permanent staff. While the initial role model for the CfS was the CfM, Williams indicated in an interview that the CfS aspired to become more like *London First,* for which he had worked.

The CfS sees itself as not being business-led, but as a diverse organization that is a mix of private, public and not-for-profit sectors. This mix is intended to provide a 'big tent' for civic dialogue that is seen as necessary in the absence of metropolitan government. According to Williams, "[o]ur role is to raise the strategic discussion…[and]…shaping the momentum of Sydney". Thus the CfS membership includes several large Sydney local governments, sporting and cultural bodies, and community housing NGOs, for example, as well as commercial companies such as major developers and global consultancies. A central concern of CfS is the governance of Sydney. It has seen a need for much increased metropolitan integration, and lobbied strongly for the creation of an overarching governing body for Sydney. The recent

establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission by the New South Wales State government is therefore a major achievement of the CfS, which has argued that Sydney works best as a unified city. This has led to a CfS emphasis on public transport, especially between western and eastern Sydney to improve access to central city jobs for the growing western Sydney workforce. CfS also supports higher density residential development as necessary to accommodate a future population of eight million. To this end, it was vocal in critiquing the major public-private WestConnex motorway scheme. In making the initial case for a metropolitan planning commission, the CfS was arguing against the strong developer lobby that had incessantly sought to reduce planning controls.

CfS primarily responds to issues through five member-led taskforces aligned with CfS priority areas. The taskforces devise policies and provide associated networking and advocacy. There are taskforces for planning, housing and governance; transport; professional and business services; liveability and 'loveability'; and smart cities. Its activities also include commissioning consultant reports, producing issues papers, conducting boardroom lunches and workshops for stakeholders, public events in the form of speeches, and writing submissions on government policy proposals and for media, such as newspaper articles, all using "considered evidence" (Williams).

More generally, CfS sees its niche role as bringing global learning into civic discourse about Sydney's future, drawing lessons from major global cities. As such, perhaps its most distinctive feature is how it acts as a metropolitan agency that formulates specific projects and policy actions, drawing on global best practice to specify the planning-related outcomes it sees as necessary for Sydney's future. Thus in the past, it initiated public discourse advocating the establishment of a powerful

metropolitan planning authority. This resulted in the establishment in 2015 of the Greater Sydney Commission to become Sydney's planning authority with statutory powers. The CfS initiated the concept of a financial technologies (fin-tech) hub, which it then started in partnership with the State government to foster Sydney's role as Australia's financial hub. The Committee has also been a significant advocate for innovative public transport proposals that were subsequently adopted, including for a fast rail line between western and central Sydney (currently being planned) funded through value capture (Committee for Sydney, 2016).

Moving beyond the Resources Boom in Perth

The CfP was formed in an attempt to diversify outside of the resources-driven economy that has been so influential in the city's development. Several of CfP's founding members had worked in Melbourne and took inspiration from CfM. Coalescing a group of Perth business leaders, they embarked on a series of stakeholder workshops to gauge the feasibility of a CfP, and how the CfM model might apply in the Perth context. The radically different economic conditions were described by Marion Fulker:

> *Melbourne started from a point of crisis when they had lost manufacturing out of Victoria to off-shore competitors. [The founder] was acutely aware that he was starting [when] we were going to go into a boom. When [they] spoke to other 'Committees For' around Australia they all talked about having a burning platform as a crisis as a rallying point. [Perth] didn't have that burning platform. So he started the conversation with – 'what is the legacy going to be*

from the [mining] boom?' rather than 'we have got an issue and how do we all

work together?

CfP was registered as a company limited by guarantee in June 2006, and when adequate seed funding was raised it appointed its inaugural CEO in 2007 to suit its agenda. Fulker continues:

They were looking for someone who understood policy. Not only policy implementation, but how did you influence and craft policy. Someone with a track record in an advocacy space. They didn't see themselves as being a lobbying organization, it was much more about relationships, advocacy, influencing space. They wanted someone who had good relationships with government, who could write well, speak well in public, you know, manage the media.

Initially with a primarily large to medium business membership, CfP's attraction to an increasing number of local governments highlighted the scope and impact of its projects. Members commit on an annual basis with an understanding of a twenty-year advocacy agenda timeframe in which annual expenditure is reported but actual outcomes are long term. Continued membership support each year is a key performance indicator (KPI) of organizational success. One interviewee cautioned that this relies on a diversity of platforms including academics, corporations, and others wishing to contribute to both economic and social progress in Perth. Interviewees identified one of Perth's challenges as being perceived as a 'branch office economy' that was subordinate to corporations headquartered elsewhere in Australia. Thus whilst Perth did not suffer during the 2008 global financial crisis to the same degree that other cities did due to a sustained resources boom, membership declined as corporate return-

to-base centralization decisions meant fewer managers in Perth to make decisions at a discretionary level without formal approval.

CfP describes itself as 'nimble', aiming to work cooperatively with a diverse range of stakeholders in Perth, in particular State government and not-for-profit organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Committee for Economic Development Australia. Rather than being a lobby or advocacy group representing particular sectoral, business or individual interests, it sees its role as focusing on community-inclusive projects which both make a systematic difference in improving the liveability of Perth and in filling a gap in the metropolitan dialogue not addressed by other organizations. This was reflected in a prominent civic leader's comments (who wished to remain anonymous):

> ...*the way that they operate means that they can easily transcend in a change of government, because a lot of the people associated with the Committee for Perth are leaders in the business community and thought leaders in their own right. And no government will want to be off-side with them in a sense.*

CfP has three main working groups comprised of members and stakeholders based on key priorities of reshaping, reforming and revitalizing Perth. Issues are identified at the member level on topics where CfP can either "lead or add to the conversation". Member involvement occurs through working groups, taskforces, surveys and thought leadership lunches. Its impact has generated wide ranging discourse amongst stakeholders and the general community on projects highly relevant to Perth. Some of these projects[4] have aimed to bring arts and culture into everyday lives (*Cultural Compact*), celebrating Indigenous culture (*Welcome to Country Guide*), promoting

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[4] See https://www.committeeforperth.com.au/research/research-projects

gender diversity and equality (*Filling up the Pool*), shifting the strategic planning discourse to a significantly larger metropolitan population (*Towards a Bright Future – A vision for Perth as a region of 3.5 million people*) and highlighting congestion issues (*Get a Move On!*). The research findings from these various projects form the basis of public events (such as luncheons and panel sessions), media releases and policy recommendations. CfP's media strategy is strategic and purposive, with information going to more than 6000 people across corporations, universities, government, and non-profits, with all reports freely available online.

Flagship achievements for CfP is are its *Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP) and *FACTBase*[5] series. CfP was one of the first national organisations to produce a RAP and has just produced its fifth RAP (2019-2021). As a plan of reconciliation with Indigenous Australians with measurable targets reported annually, RAPs are key platforms for CfP's vision in creating a culturally rich city, and encourages acknowledgement and pride of the history of Indigenous Australians in Western Australia. Another point of distinction is CfP's FACTBase series, which provides regular updates on issues such as liveability, migration, and global connectedness that correspond to its various projects. Annually, the research agenda is decided by a committee by mapping out topics to generate a coherent dialogue on issues related to the economic, social, demographic and political character of the metropolitan region, giving

> *government somewhere else to go to get informed in ideas about what is happening in the City rather than just local government ...who are closest to electors. ... I just think that the sharing of ideas, questioning, learning... copying*

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[5] See https://www.committeeforperth.com.au/research/factbase-research/factbase-bulletins.

is important. I think the Committees across Australia have had that sort of

impact. (anonymous interviewee)

Brisbane: The New Kid on the Block

The emergence in 2018 of the 'Committee for Brisbane' (CfB) from what was formerly the Brisbane Development Association demonstrates that notwithstanding the difficulties of effective metropolitan governance, there is genuine demand for leadership amongst regional stakeholders of various sorts. As an outgrowth of a sixty-year-old organization whose urban remit has been tied rather intimately to property development interests and set in a geographically large jurisdiction, the CfB is as yet in its embryonic stages with the intention of drawing together business, community and government sectors.

The longstanding lack of a CCR in Brisbane was explained by numerous factors (cf. Pemberton & Searle, 2016). First, due to an amalgamation of smaller council areas in 1925, the City of Brisbane is itself by far the largest local council area in Australia, with a population of over one million. Its economic and demographic importance means that it has historically been characterised by a great degree of autonomy within Queensland and a legacy of "strong mayors" (Caulfield and Wanna, 1995). Second, Brisbane sits within a greater capital city statistical area of 2 million and is bound by several large councils which are part of a greater Southeast Queensland region of over 3 million inhabitants. Thus, although Brisbane itself is the third-largest city-region in Australia (after Sydney and Melbourne), it fits within a wider context of Southeast Queensland, with multiple competing interests with adjacent councils agendas tied to agriculture (Lockyer Valley), tourism (Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast), and/or more general pro-growth (Moreton Bay, Redland City) or anti-growth (Noosa) measures.

As Ian Klug, Chairman of Brisbane Marketing, observed in an interview, the external perception of Brisbane is often that:

> *In Queensland, we have the Great Barrier Reef, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, and – by the way – there's a large capital city of two million.*

Third, Queensland's population is the least centralised of any Australian state except the smallest (Tasmania), meaning that the capital city of Brisbane, and its greater metropolitan region, are perennially balanced against the needs of central and north Queensland. Using the region's tourism agenda as an example, an economic development planner noted:

> *In other states, there is clearly one city they're selling—Sydney, Melbourne, Perth. In Queensland in tourism you've got a lot of territory and […] definitely more than one place a global tourist would be interested.*

Prior the emergence of CfB, a number of organizations played analogous roles, but due to the heavy influence of Brisbane City Council none emerged as *the* CCR. As a former Chief Operating Officer of Brisbane Marketing points out, Brisbane City Council's expansive remit acted as a barrier to regional integration:

> *so I think there is a sense among the grownups running the councils in Southeast Queensland that locally we have artificial lines and petty politics, but when you look at Brisbane from a global perspective Southeast Queensland is a single entity with a lot going for it. Individually they're not as powerful. It's going to happen at a local level, I don't think it's going to happen at a state level, they don't understand, it's the way they think.*

Multi-scalar cooperation was identified by multiple interviewees as a bulwark, with Blauensteiner of Brisbane Marketing pointing out that:

It's a very complex ecosystem here. I think getting consensus and group support is harder because one hand you've got the relationship between the City and the State. Then you've got the relationship between the City and the surrounding larger metropolitan areas like the Gold Coast...

Even with CfB in place, Brisbane Marketing (BM) to a large extent fills the metropolitan economic development role in the regional boosterism and events space. Its annual budget of AUD 34 million is mainly funded by Brisbane City Council (BCC), of which it is a fully owned subsidiary. BM originated in 2006 as its precursor merged with the Office of Economic Development (OED), which had been established by the Lord Mayor in 1986. The OED's mandate in response to shifting economic conditions was then carried on by an embryonic BM. As such, economic development was made a key priority around platforms of tourism, investment attraction, and more recently a variety of high-profile cultural events and incoming student attraction. BM is responsible for running and/or supporting events such as the Brisbane International tennis tournament, Asia-Pacific Screen Awards, convention attraction, maintaining South Bank and the Queen Street Mall—two of Brisbane's flagship recreation and shopping areas, respectively.

As a result, metropolitan transport advocacy, economic development, and equity agendas have had limited attention outside formal state initiatives. As one expert remarked on attracting international students to Brisbane:

I think more collaboration between national, state, and regional government and economic development authorities is critical. Really, really, critical.

Regional cooperation in planning and economic development is also achieved to a more limited degree through the Southeast Queensland Council of Mayors' (SEQ

Mayors) regional mandate, and various State government departments such as Economic Development Queensland, and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP). Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) plays a regional marketing role, yet a notable void exists in transport advocacy, with perennial antagonism between city, metropolitan, state, and federal interest in long-term planning (cf. Burke, 2016). As BM's former Director of Marketing and Communications Shane Rodgers pointed out, different levels of government…

> *for political reasons want to do their own thing. I think if you look at Auckland, which is a good comparison, there's a good connection between the Auckland executives and the national government and that's where it comes from. They don't have the structural impediments that we do. In various places, I think the jury's out on whether the government runs these things very well at all. I think the most successful ones get a bit of a nudge from governments but they become organic and the industry actually takes them on.*

Conclusion

Territorial rescaling has rendered globally oriented city-regions as key loci of competition, as the national state is increasingly bypassed by a variety of economic processes and actors. The cases of Sydney and Perth demonstrate the commonalities and differences between two cognate coalitions that have emerged in response to globally scaled issues; and in Brisbane, an emerging committee complements a plurality of actors in this space. Policy directions have taken various forms over the years and across committees, including responding to de-industrialization in Melbourne; a global resource boom in Perth; the aftermath of the Olympics in Sydney;

and Queensland's international student and visitor growth in Brisbane. As Addie (2013) has noted, "economic imperatives, augmented with discourses of environmental sustainability, increasingly pressure states to pursue spatial projects which construct the city-region as a political space and mobilize regional space as a means to restore accumulation" (p. 191). CCR actively reterritorialize metropolitan governance through their networked structure that leverages multi-scalar relationships to coordinate the needs of diverse stakeholders.

Metropolitan government as an outcome of reterritorialization has been an ongoing process with differential outcomes that are contingent upon their spatial and temporal contexts. The emergence of CCR provides evidence regarding the effectiveness of networked metropolitan governance in the absence of a formal metropolitan scale of government. Business leaders sit alongside members of local non-profits, councils, and advocacy groups of various sorts to achieve common ground on what are often framed as 'burning issues' in transport, economic development, regional equity, and/or environmental platforms. CCR act 'vertically' to confront issues that are wedged between levels of government, addressing what are often partisan political issues, or others that are siloed within various authorities. In theory, CCR aim to overcome the tensions inherent to federal systems, characterized alternatively by service bottlenecks, political stalemates, and policy impasses resulting from discord between multiple levels of government.

CCR also draw together groupings of disparate 'horizontal' actors around platforms that may have otherwise not emerged. This redirects the relationship between respective cities' corporate élites and politicians from a formal dialogue toward conversations ranging from bicycle lanes to indigenous affairs to gender equity.

And perhaps critically, CCR networks act 'diagonally' to connect with cognate committees around a common set of values to allow for mutual learning and innovation upon governance practices.

CCR reflect an attempt at new governmental configurations in response to increasingly complex global challenges. As McGuirk has observed in Sydney, "new players are drawn into governance activities and the network of actors contributing to governance is defined more by its dynamic and disparate nature than by its stability or coalescence into regimes" (2003; p. 214). Despite their apparent novelty, however, the emergence of CCR in Australia and similar metropolitan coalitions internationally in the 21st century has been cautiously received in some academic circles. Swyngedouw (2005) warns that such coalitions may "prove to be the Trojan Horse that diffuses and consolidates the 'market' as the principal institutional form" (p. 2005). CCR as such have been met with some degree of cynicism as "essentially discursive public–private partnerships" with a "multiplicity of political projects at work" (Wetzstein, 2013: 385). Furthermore, such governance structures often reinforce pre-existing hierarchies (Nelles *et al*, 2018), privileging strong government actors and large corporations over marginalized voices. According to an economic development expert, Australian economic development organizations resembled lobby groups in order to 'fill hotel rooms' from the outset; this contrasted with local councils as there was:

> *No expectation that local governments play in the economic development space…no financial driver, no tradition, no lobby.*

While there is reason to be auspicious regarding the networked structure of CCR, we observe that CCR are highly reliant on external funding, meaning that they may be

perceived as lobby groups rather than genuine coalitions. This begs the important question of whether the open dialogue promoted by their networked structure is sufficient and sustainable to achieve pluralistic and equitable outcomes, or whether further evolution may witness the formalization of CCR as 'agencies' or 'commissions' as in the past. The Australian government's recent promotion of 'City Deals' as a means by which to bridge multiple scales of government suggests that further 'innovations' in reterritorialization are likely to proceed.

Looking beyond the Australasian context, the 'networks of coalitions' framework provides a number of lessons for metropolitan governance. First, that the metropolitan scale of governance is perhaps the most elusive. While contexts differ, metropolitan boundaries often traverse national/state/provincial lines (Europe, Canada), bring together councils with competing interests (U.S.), or appear to contest established state-related agencies (water, transport, for example). Second, that networked governance can be shaped along multiple dimensions to overcome some of the issues faced by formal jurisdictional amalgamation or cooperation. Collaboration *within* metropolitan regions is complemented by collaboration *between* them, even when often competing for national-scale resources or global economic impact. This is supplemented by a bridging role *between* scales of government. And finally, networks of coalitions provide a pathway toward achieving metropolitan consensus in geographical contexts with competing interests. We thus contend that the political effectiveness of CCR is ultimately determined by the network externalities produced by these relationships, lending them legitimacy to reach across established political lines.

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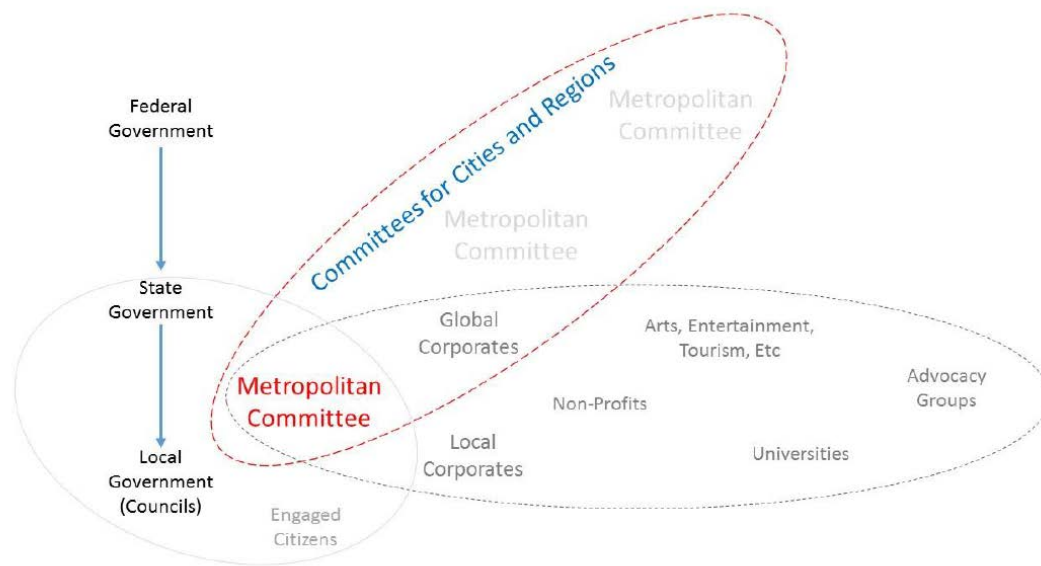movement. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 68,* 267-278.

Figure 1. Vertical, Diagonal, and Horizontal Relationships Maintained by 'Committees for Cities and Regions'

City/Region	Est.	Mission	Membership	Scale	Population (2016 Census)	Formative/Driving Normative Goals
Melbourne	1985	'Ideas to Outcomes'	111 members over 3 categories: Foundation, Corporate, Not-for-Profit	Metropolitan	4.49 million	• Urban liveability • Prosperity • International reputation
Sydney	1997	'Creating a prosperous and sustainable city'	147 members: major business, professional, cultural and community organisations.	CBD; Greater Sydney (from 2012)	4.82 million	• Global competitiveness • Creativity • Sustainability • Prosperity
Wyndham	1998	'Building a Better Tomorrow - Today'	48 over 4 categories: Corporate Plus, Corporate, Business, Associate & Individual	Werribee CBD & region	222,000	• Build relationships & local strengths • Develop networks & influential connections
Geelong	2001	'We stand for a better Geelong'	167 over 3 categories: Corporate Plus, Corporate, and Community	Geelong and region	279,000	• Distinctive and competitive identity • Improving local conditions: infrastructure • Sustainability • Prosperity
Auckland	2003	'Creating the world's most liveable city'	56 over two categories: Corporate, Associate	Greater Auckland	1.66 million*	• Competitive economic performance • Local Government Reform
Ballarat	2005	'A champion for issues, enhancing our future'	90 members 7 categories: Executive, Corporate Gold, Corporate, Small Business, Community, Associate, Honorary	Ballarat and region	157,000	• Advance planning system & lobby networks • Leadership and strong voice in development • Economic and social prosperity
Perth	2006	'Promoting and enabling change'	110 members over 3 categories: Gold, Silver, Bronze	Greater Perth	1.94 million	• Evidence-based advocacy for policy • Global competitiveness • Liveability and diversity • Long-term research relations with university
Portland	2008	'Working towards a vibrant and economically sustainable community'	30 members over 4 categories: Executive, Corporate, Associate, Community	Portland and region	11,000	• Regional championship • Building economic prosperity • Building sustainable community foundations
Gippsland	2011	'Working for you Working for Gippsland'	85 members over 3 categories: Foundation, General, Small Business and Community Organisations	Gippsland-wide	271,000 (Latrobe-Gippsland)	• Advance planning system • United regional voice (peak representative) • Improving local conditions: infrastructure
Echuca Moama	2011	'A more prosperous and vibrant Echuca Moama'	36 members over 5 categories: Executive, Corporate, Business, Incorporated Association, Community and Honorary	Twin-city and region	20,000	• Economic prosperity • Social amenity • Identify and advocate projects and issues
Wagga Wagga	2011	'Championing positive change for a better Wagga Wagga'	62 members over 5 categories: Corporate, Executive, Business, Associate, Affiliate	Wagga Wagga and region	54,000	• Champion sustainable progress • Platform for collaborative change • Prosperity
Shepparton	2013	To be Victoria's Food Bowl and business centre…'	95 members over 4 categories: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Community	Shepparton and surround	130,000	• Champion sustainable progress • Renewal and regeneration

Table 1: Foundation drivers and key characteristics of selected Committees for Cities and Regions across Australasia (Source: Committees for Cities and Regions, 2013; Australian Bureau of Statistics; *Auckland population as of 2017 from NZ Stats) Membership as of March 2018.